

REMARKS

Claims 14-16, and 20-35 are pending herein. Claim 14 has been amended, and claims 17-19 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. In addition, new claims 24-35 have been added.

1. Claims 14-21 were rejected under §112, second paragraph. This rejection is respectfully traversed for the following reasons.

Claim 14 has been amended herein to more clearly define the present invention. As recited in claim 14, the lower grooved portion is provided "for supporting the wafers." The prior language of "will be in contact" has been removed from claim 14. In this regard, it noted that the PTO in the Office Action dated February 4, 2004, requested Applicant to incorporate the language "wafer will be contact" and "which will support" into the claims. However, Applicant does acknowledge that the Examiner in charge of the present application has changed. Additionally, the prior recitation of the change in contour of the lower portion has been removed, and claims 17 and 18 have been canceled to attend to the remaining issues.

For at least the foregoing reasons, in view of the amendments to claim 14 and the cancellation of claims 17-19, reconsideration and withdrawal of the §112, second paragraph rejection are respectfully requested.

2. Claim 14 and 20 were rejected under §102(b) over Anderson et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed for the following reasons.

Anderson et al. describe a wafer basket that is utilized for storage of wafers during wafer fabrication. In contrast, embodiments of the present invention have been developed for holding wafers during semiconductor fabrication such as during high temperature processing, distinct art areas. In any event, in reference to column 1, lines 14-22, Anderson et al. teach that prior wafer storage cassettes disadvantageously require unloading and loading by handling each individual wafer separately, causing contamination and breakage, and such prior wafer storage cassettes are unreasonably large, these drawbacks apparently stemming from use of slotted cassette designs. In an attempt to overcome those stated deficiencies, Anderson et al. teach a slotless wafer basket

for receiving a stacked assembly of wafers. See column 2, lines 55-65. As described, the wafer basket is configured to receive a stack of wafers that are in intimate contact with each other, "in the same manner as coins in a coin counter." Column 2, lines 55-57. Turning to the drawings, Anderson et al. teach a basket 10 having a retainer 14, having a generally arcuate shape for receiving wafers 12' and 18'. Two wafer retainer rails 14 and 16 are provided, each respectively having notches 15 and 17. These notches are exclusively configured and provided for engagement with tabs 20 and 21 of stabilizer plate 18, and lugs 42 of stabilizer plate 40. Please refer to FIGS. 5, 6 and 8 of Anderson et al.

Anderson et al. fail to even remotely disclose (or suggest) a wafer boat having a plurality of slots for receiving semiconductor wafers therein, and further, fail to disclose or even remotely suggest a lower grooved portion for supporting wafers. In this regard, claim 14 has been amended herein to recite "lower grooved portion" as described throughout the present application in connection with lower grooved portion 20 shown in the present drawings. As is quite clear by the Anderson drawings, particularly FIG. 7, the lower portion 34 for supporting the semiconductor wafers is not grooved. Again, the only "grooves" even remotely disclosed by Anderson et al. correspond to rail notches 17 and 15 provided respectively in rails 16 and 14. Clearly, those notches are configured for engagement with respective lugs of the stabilizer plates as noted above, not configured for receiving wafers.

For at least the foregoing reasons in view of the amendments to claim 14, Applicant respectfully submits that the presently claimed invention is not anticipated by (or even remotely obvious in light of) Anderson et al. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the §102 rejection over Anderson et al. are respectfully requested.

3. Claims 15 and 16 were rejected under §103 over Anderson et al. in further view of Sibley. This rejection is respectfully traversed for the following reasons.

Foremost, Sibley fails to overcome the deficiencies of Anderson et al., discussed above. Further, Applicant emphasizes that the entire disclosure of Anderson et al. and every embodiment therein is drawn to a wafer basket device used during wafer fabrication, such as slicing, etch grinding, lapping, and cleaning. The disclosed wafer basket of Anderson et al. is not intended or deployed for high temperature use. Accordingly, one of ordinary skill in the art

would not have incorporated the extraordinarily expensive materials disclosed by Sibley, namely silicon carbide, and certainly not recrystallized silicon carbide. And still further, while Applicant notes that Sibley discloses a plurality of slots for individually receiving respective wafers, such a configuration is precisely the opposite of what is taught by Anderson et al. That is, Anderson et al. teach reduction of the footprint of the disclosed wafer basket by providing a structure that accommodates a stack of wafers, basically a slotless design. The art does not even remotely suggest modification of the Anderson wafer basket to have a slotted design.

For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that the presently claimed invention would not have been obvious over Anderson et al. in view of Sibley. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the §103 rejection over those references are respectfully requested.

4. Turning to the new claims, Claim 24 has been added to generally parallel the features of claim 14, additionally reciting that the plurality of slots are spaced apart from each other at a constant spacing for receiving respective wafers that are then spaced apart from each other at that constant spacing. Support for the foregoing language is provided in the present drawings, and particularly in the present specification, page 7, second full paragraph. It is quite clear that the cited prior art fails to disclose or suggest the added features of claim 24, drawn to slot spacing.

In addition, new independent claim 27 has been incorporated, drawn to a wafer boat combination including a wafer boat and plurality of wafers. This claim has been incorporated to provide foundation for certain wafer limitations. Claim 27 recites even further patentable subject matter over the cited prior art.

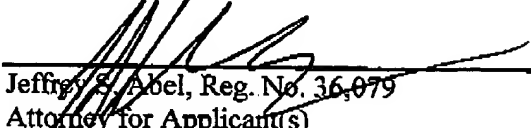
Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is requested to issue a notice of allowance for all pending claims.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action by the Applicant would be desirable for placing this application in even better condition for issue, the Examiner is requested to telephone Applicant's undersigned attorney at the number listed below.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees, which may be required, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account Number 50-2469.

Respectfully submitted,

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